

Register of Historic Kansas Places

Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. The format is similar to the National Register of Historic Places form. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Hotel Broadview
Other name/site number Broadview Towers

2. Location

Street & number 110 W. 6th Ave ☐ not for publication
City or town Emporia ☐ vicinity
State Kansas Code KS County Lyon Code 111 Zip code 66801

3.,4. Certification

I hereby certify that this property is listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Patrick J. Jellner DSHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

11-25-08
Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>
	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>
	total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN
MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style

MOVEMENTS / Commercial Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: Concrete/Brick/Hollow Clay Tile

Roof: Asphalt

Other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the State Register)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Period of Significance

1923-1958

Significant Dates

1923

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

George Siedhoff (Builder)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	4	7	4	6	0	8	9	4	2	5	4	5	3	7
Zone	Easting		Northing												
2															

3															
Zone	Easting		Northing												
4															

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Christy Davis, Rachel Nugent, Craig Miner

Organization Davis Preservation, LLC Date 3/31/2008

Street & number 909 1/2 Kansas Ave, Suite 7 Telephone 785-234-5053

City or town Topeka State Kansas Zip code 66612

Property Owner

Name Broadview Towers, Inc. (c/o Becky Krueger); Joseph and Jane Conroy

Street & number 110 W. 6th, 613 N. Merchant Telephone 620-342-7316; 620-342-0856

City or town Emporia State Kansas Zip code 66801

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*Hotel Broadview
Lyon County, Kansas*

Narrative Description

Introduction

The Hotel Broadview is a seven-story reinforced concrete, hollow clay tile, and brick Commercial Style hotel building that defines the skyline of downtown Emporia, Kansas (population 26,760). The building is being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and Community Planning and Development.

Setting

The Hotel Broadview, renamed Broadview Towers in 1974, is located at 110 West Sixth Avenue, in the western fringes of downtown Emporia, Kansas. The building is situated on a site formerly occupied by the Whitley Hotel, which was among several hotels constructed in the vicinity of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad's passenger depot prior to the construction of a new depot in the early 1880s. When the Hotel Broadview replaced the Whitley in the 1920s, the address had only become increasingly desirable, as West Sixth Street is also a regional east-west thoroughfare, US Highway 50, then called the "New Santa Fe Trail." One block to the east of the Hotel Broadview is a regional north-south thoroughfare, State Route 99.

The large L-shaped building dominates the northwest corner at the intersection of West Sixth Avenue and North Merchant Street. The main seven-story portion of the building covers the entire length of the lot along West Sixth Avenue and continues up North Merchant Street. A series of single-story storefronts extends northward from the main block along the east edge of the property. Immediately to the west of the building is a public alley. The northwest corner of the lot paved. The adjoining lot to the north of the building is a surface parking lot. The neighborhood becomes predominantly residential just a few blocks to the west. The Hotel Broadview still stands today as the tallest building in this Midwest city, where it competes only with grain elevators for dominance of the skyline.

Exterior - Overall

The Hotel Broadview has a tripartite composition. The overall massing of the building is separated visually into three parts on the south and east elevations: the one-story base, the five-story "shaft," and a one-story cap. The entire façade is brick, although specific areas have been painted. The base is composed of a series of altered storefronts. Red-brick pilasters on

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stone bases separate the storefront bays. Two thin stone beltcourses separate the base from the intermediate stories. The space between the beltcourses contains rectangular raised brick panels composed of headers. The pilasters run the entire height of the building up to the stepped parapet, articulating the corners of the building and delineating the bays that continue from the ground level. The façade between the pilasters was originally red brick that has since been painted a cream color. Another thin beltcourse separates the intermediate stories from the top-story cap. Above the seventh-story row of windows is a red-brick stepped parapet with limestone coping. The parapet contains the simple caps above the pilasters and the small, evenly-spaced stone ornamental details. The windows are arranged in pairs throughout the building, except on the west elevation and the north elevation of the east wing. The simple window openings have brick sills. Some of the openings have patches or covers at the former locations of window air-conditioning units.

South (Front) Elevation

The south elevation is the main front elevation that spans the entire lot on West Sixth Avenue. The façade is organized symmetrically into seven identical bays. The first story contains six storefronts, three on either side of the main entrance. Each storefront is divided into three openings separated by a thin column of dark gray brick and capped with a thick transom of the same brick. This alteration dates to the 1970s renovation. Most of the storefront openings have been boarded up. The intermediate stories above are also separated into seven symmetrical bays. Each bay is composed of cream painted brick and contains two windows at each story. The windows are not original to the building. The parapet, which steps up and down above each pilaster, is also divided into bays. Each bay contains a raised brick panel with a carved stone element at its center. The central bay contains a carved-stone shield.

North (Rear) Elevation

The north elevation is the unadorned rear of the building, although the ornamented parapet wraps around from the east elevation. The entire brick façade is painted cream and the six windows at each story are arranged simply. The first story occupies a large footprint on the lot in order to provide service entrances and loading docks. The single-story mechanical penthouse and elevator headhouse can be seen from the north side extending above the intersection of the two wings.

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East (Side) Elevation

The east elevation is another primary elevation that is composed of the same organization and ornamentation as the south façade. The seven-story portion of the building that extends along North Merchant Street is divided into three bays. Each of the storefronts on the first story is divided into four openings rather than the three openings on the south elevation. A single-story row of storefronts extends northward from main portion of the building. The four storefronts are separated by red brick pilasters on stone bases. The parapet wall above the stone beltcourse that continues from the main building contains raised brick panels composed of headers. The parapet is capped with stone coping. The three northern-most storefronts have large plate-glass windows that occupy two-thirds of the storefront opening while an entrance occupies the other third.

West (Side) Elevation

The west elevation contains three full-height pilasters creating two fully framed bays and one open-ended bay on the north end. The north bay, which does not have any windows is the stair tower. The south bay contains one centered window at each story. The ornamental features on the south façade, such as the beltcourses and parapet wall, continue along the west façade as well, but only for the two southern bays.

Interior

The interior of the Hotel Broadview is composed of a concrete frame and plaster walls. The interior plan has been altered to accommodate changes in uses over the decades. The wide entrance hall from front to back and the centrally located elevator bank remain intact. There are several other character-defining features that remain, such as letterboxes, original doors, and cast-iron stair railings and newel posts.

The basement contains mostly mechanical spaces not meant for public use. There are several small rooms that were intended for the use of the hotel staff – and some finished for use as the hotel billiard hall. These rooms retain their original doors and structural glass block. Other spaces in the basement have been converted to finished recreational rooms for later residents.

The original first-floor shop spaces and lobby that can be seen in the 1929 Sanborn Map have since been replaced with several residential units of various sizes. The original storefronts

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have also been removed and replaced with solid walls. The spaces were altered in order to install bathrooms and kitchens in each of the residential units. The wide hall that leads from the front entrance on West Sixth Avenue to the elevator bank remains unchanged. The elevator cabs are original as well.

The floor plans for each of the upper stories are identical. A double-loaded corridor, flanked by apartment units, stretches along the building's length. The elevator bank is located in a small hallway off the central point of the main corridor. The center stair tower is located directly to the east of the elevators. There is another stair tower attached to the northwest corner of the building, connected to a small hallway at the western end of the main corridor. The residential units are numbered one through ten beginning in the southwest corner and proceeding counter-clockwise down the corridor, ending at the northwest corner. Units One, Three, Nine and Ten are efficiencies while the remaining units are one-bedroom apartments.

The stair towers are concrete with metal stairs and railings. The mechanical penthouse extends from the center of the building above the elevator shaft. The interior walls of the penthouse are composed of hollow clay tiles.

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*Hotel Broadview
Lyon County, Kansas*

Statement of Significance

Introduction

The Hotel Broadview is being nominated to the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and Community Planning and Development. The hotel was originally completed in 1923 and remained open until May 1964, after which it was remodeled into a Men's Dormitory for the College of Emporia. It was again remodeled for senior housing in 1974.

A Brief History of Emporia

For eighty-five years, from the time of its construction to the present, the Hotel Broadview has remained Emporia's largest and tallest building, defining the city's skyline. The construction of this imposing structure, dubbed "a fitting tribute to [Emporia's] progressiveness," marked a zenith in the town's development, which began during the chaotic territorial years.

The name Emporia was probably a mistaken Latin plural for the word "Emporium," but the significance of the town as an economic engine where things were sold was not misplaced.¹ The site, twenty miles south of the Santa Fe Trail and near the junction of the Neosho and Cottonwood rivers, cost \$1,800 when it was purchased from certain Wyandotte Indians in 1857; but its value rapidly appreciated. Preston B. Plumb, one of the four founders, brought a press up the Missouri River, freighted it to the unadorned tall grass prairie that was to be the townsite, and started a newspaper, the *Kansas News*. Despite regular epidemics of smallpox and typhoid fever, the town soon built a log church and a group of buildings. By 1872 Plumb was a prominent politician (he shortly became U.S. Senator from Kansas), and had established the First National Bank in the now substantial town of Emporia.²

A key early event also was the successful lobbying by Emporia, along with Lawrence and Manhattan, for the location of the state university. The main educational prize, the University of Kansas, went to Lawrence, but Emporia got the Kansas State Normal School, which began operation in 1865. The competition for state institutions—colleges, prisons,

¹ Craig Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 105.

² William E. Connelley, *The Life of Preston B. Plumb, 1837-1891* (Chicago: Browne & Howell Company, 1913), 60-61, 63-70, 216, 230.

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and the capitol—was vigorous, and Emporia did well.³ The College of Emporia added another higher education institution to the town in 1882.⁴

Equally significant in stabilizing the economy of the town were its railroads. The Missouri, Kansas, Texas Railroad, which reached Emporia in December 1869, managed to extend its empire into Texas and tap the cattle trade. The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad, which arrived at Emporia in July of 1870, placed the town on the main line of what turned out to be one of the few railroads whose transcontinental ambitions were ever realized. By 1883, Emporia had a population of 6,000.

Towns, of course, are characterized by their buildings. C.V. Eskridge was the diligent agent of the town company, and the first thing he did was to erect a hotel, The Emporia House, owned by that company. Along with the *Kansas News* building and Jay's Opera House, it gave the early town a look of Victorian capability. Hotels were always prominent features. A state history published in 1883 noted: "Emporia is celebrated all over the West for the excellence of its hotel facilities." By that time there were "ten or twelve" hotels in Emporia, the most impressive being the Park Place, opened in 1878, the Hotel Coolidge (renamed the Hotel Whitley), a \$30,000 structure, opened in 1881, and the New Fifth Avenue Hotel, opened in 1882.⁵

When the Hotel Broadview opened in 1923, Emporia was known throughout the U.S., and, if can be argued, even the world, as the quintessential American heartland small town. This was due in no small part to the efforts of William Allen White, who came to town in 1895 to take over, as owner and editor, the struggling *Emporia Gazette*. Right away he caught the ear of the nation with his anti-Populist editorial "What's The Matter with Kansas?," and it was followed by many more that were equally compelling. When White sat down on the day of his teenage daughter's funeral in 1921 to write her obituary, he created a classic.⁶

³ Miner, *Kansas*, 122, 124. Clifford Griffin, *The University of Kansas: A History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1974), 26.

⁴ Frank Blackmar, *Kansas: A Cyclopedia of State History* . . . 2 vols. (Chicago: Standard Publishing Company, 1912), I: 588.

⁵ *History of the State of Kansas* . . . (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1883), 845-851.

⁶ White's history in Emporia may be followed in David Hinshaw, *A Man From Kansas: The Story of William Allen White* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1945); Sally Foreman Griffith, *Home Town News: William Allen White & the Emporia Gazette* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Walter Johnson, *William Allen White's America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947).

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The Mary White he portrayed in that famous obituary was truly the American girl—balanced, optimistic, and energetic—everyone would love to believe was more universal than she really was. White, however, was wonderful at convincing, that, whatever other places were like, Emporia was like a family to him and to Mary. They were of it and it was of them. White created and reflected what one author called the “preferred mythology” of both Emporia and the United States. Both were eager in the 1920s for the “Return to Normalcy” after the upheaval connected with World War I and the rise of the Bolsheviks in Russia. Emporia, Kansas, with its matter-of-fact and totally-sane newspaper editor, seemed the place to find it. White wrote in 1920: “The passing decade has seen a marked change in the American country town. Emporia is only typical of the best of those towns, wherein people are learning to spend money on the pleasant things of life. Ugliness of various sorts is slowly disappearing. The community spirit is growing.”⁷

All of it involved, and was symbolized powerfully by buildings. White talked often in his editorials and letters about his ten-room red sandstone house in Emporia, now a preserved National Historic Landmark and a budding tourist attraction. “Here,” he said, “we have lived... Here the children were born. Here we have seen the major pageant of our lives pass.”⁸ It was at his home, at the hotel, and at various other sites in Emporia that he gathered the knowledge and strength to be such a player on the national stage. In 1930 Emporia was a town of just over 13,000. But it was not just any town; it was one of the most watched, one of the most interpreted small towns in the country. Every detail of White’s walks up and down Commercial Street were known and reflected upon far beyond the boundaries of Kansas. Every obituary White wrote was a masterpiece of abstraction, from the passing of an individual to a meditation on the meaning of community and continuity as time passed and things changed.⁹

The Hotel Broadview was not just any building in Emporia. It was seven-stories for one thing, and for another it once hosted a state convention of the Ku Klux Klan and thus raised the ire of editor White. White ran for governor of Kansas in 1924 on a courageous anti-Klan plank. He argued that the growing influence of the Ku Klux Klan as a trend inappropriate to All-American Emporia. In his campaign in print and speeches, he was very specific, and named names.

⁷ Edward Gale Agran, *“Too Good A Town:” William Allen White and the Emerging Rhetoric of Middle America* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1998), 6-7, 111.

⁸ William Allen White, *The Autobiography of William Allen White* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1946), 323-24.

⁹ An example is White’s Sept. 16, 1927 editorial reproduced in William Allen White, *Forty Years on Mains Street*. Compiled by Russell Fitzgibbon (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1937), 51-52.

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There was an altercation in the lobby of the Broadview about the availability of hotel guest list, and a series of scathing editorials followed. In those same issues, however, White reinforced his community loyalty by writing what a fine hotel the Broadview was and what an asset to the town. "Always remember," he said, "after you spank a child, you should give it a piece of candy. It makes everyone feel better."¹⁰

Emporia was not just any American country town. And the Hotel Broadview was part and parcel of the Emporia community in the 1920s.

19th and Early 20th Century Hotels

The history of the Hotel Broadview falls into the broader context of the rise and fall of city hotels nationwide. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hotels, particularly those in the west, were economic and social centers. In their study of the subject, Raitz and Jones argue that hotels were better indicators of a city's "personality and progress" than government buildings and churches.¹¹ As the Broadview neared completion, *The Emporia Gazette* reminded its readers that "A good hotel is an important asset to any town."¹²

In the years before railroads, hotels, were also stage coach stops.¹³ After the arrival of the railroad, they provided a place for traveling salesmen to exhibit their wares. Early advertisements for the Broadview boasted that the hotel, which included sample rooms and six storefronts, was "Emporia's Largest Business Institution." Before apartment buildings, hotels served as temporary housing for prospective residents and bachelor entrepreneurs. The construction of the Broadview coincided with a surge in apartment-building construction. Early hotels also often housed a town's only commercial dining establishments. At the time of the Broadview's opening, the hotel featured three "eating places," including a coffee shop, dining room, and grill.¹⁴

¹⁰ Frank Clough, *William Allen White of Emporia* (New York: Whittlesy House, 1941), 150-53.

¹¹ Karl B. Raitz and John Paul Jones, III, "The City Hotel as Landscape Artifact and Community Symbol," *Journal of Cultural Geography*, V. 9, 1988, 28.

¹² "Broadview will Open August 2," *The Emporia Gazette*.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ "Emporia's New Hotel One of Best in Middle West," *The Emporia Gazette*.

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Because of the essential role they played in community life, their uninterrupted operation was imperative to the livelihood of a town. The loss of a hotel, through fire, as in the case of the Broadview's predecessor, or natural disaster, was not uncommonly met with strong calls for reconstruction, often subsidized by business leaders and volunteer laborers.¹⁵ In the early twentieth century, many modern fireproof hotels, such as the Broadview, which replaced the fire-destroyed Hotel Whitley, and the Hotel Ripley in Newton, Kansas, were financed through the sale of stock to community leaders. Investment was promoted as a civic duty by local newspapers that printed the names of stockholders on the front page.

By the 1930s, the luster of community hotels had begun to fade – due to a number of dynamics. Restaurants that were independent of hotels fed the town's residents. Apartment buildings, which became common after World War I, housed temporary residents and unmarried folk. Movie theaters entertained broad audiences. And roadside motels, situated along highways, which had begun to take precedence over the railroads, catered to travelers. As a result, many small-town hotels often lost their appeal. Unfortunately, many were demolished during the 1960s and 1970s. Others, like the Broadview, were given a second life as housing.

Emporia's Hotels

The Broadview was built at the end of an era when town hotels were central to community and commercial life and, therefore, was not the city's first effort to provide shelter for visitors, businessmen, and potential investors. Mrs. J. H. Clapp, a shoemaker's wife and first female resident, provided an essential service to the nascent territorial outpost when she opened a boarding house in a 14' X 16' shack. This crude abode provided lodging to pioneers until the Emporia Town Company could complete its hotel, the Emporia House, in April 1857.¹⁶ Like many community hotels, the Emporia House was a center for both travelers and residents, housing a "grand dinner" for Emporia's Civil War volunteers the night before they answered the Union's call.

After the Emporia House closed in 1866, concerned citizens rallied to reopen it, achieving this task in 1869. By then, plans for another hotel, the Buckeye House (1870 - later renamed Fifth

¹⁵ Raitz and Jones, 22.

¹⁶ A 1953 *Emporia Gazette* article (see below) states that the Emporia Hotel was the town's second building. This either means that Mrs. Clapp's shack was the first – or that the count only included "permanent" commercial buildings.

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Avenue Hotel) were well underway. The Buckeye was the first in a long line of hotels that opened in the 1870s and early 1880s. These included the Madison House, Merchants Hotel, and Park Place Hotel. When the Santa Fe Railroad built a new passenger station at 3rd and Neosho, two new hotels, the Palace Hotel and Robinson Hotel, popped up nearby.

Despite its relative distance from the new passenger station, the Hotel Whitley (1879), originally the Coolidge Hotel, was the most prominent of the boom-time lodgings. Like the Broadview, which would later occupy the same site, the Whitley was constructed with funds from local stockholders. A few years after the building's construction, stockholder Colonel H. C. Whitley, a "buffalo hunter and officer in the federal secret service," purchased the remaining shares. The Whitley was a stately three-story Italianate hotel with stone hood molds and a pressed-metal cornice, remaining Emporia's largest hotel for more than four decades.¹⁷

In March 1921, just two years after Colonel Whitley's death the Whitley Hotel, the city's oldest and largest, was destroyed in a tragic fire that cost \$150,000 in damage to the building and the life of Topekan James Daniels. In the wake of the devastating fire, Emporia's business leaders commandeered the Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. buildings, completed at a cost of \$100,000 each, to house the city's guests until a new hotel could be completed.¹⁸

The Hotel Broadview

Eager to replace the Hotel Whitley, community leaders swiftly formed the Emporia Hotel Corporation, which sold 1430 shares of stock to 300 Emporia citizens. On August 26, 1922, the corporation contracted with George Siedhoff to construct the hotel – and with Siedhoff's Hotel Broadview Company to operate it. C. A. Stannard, President of the Emporia Hotel Corporation, held the largest number of stocks in the Hotel Broadview Company. William Allen White was the second-largest stockholder.

The new hotel would be named the Hotel Broadview, after Siedhoff's Broadview Hotel in Wichita, which was under construction at the time the Whitley burned. George Siedhoff (1878-1966) was born in St. Louis in 1878. In 1905, he moved to Virginia where he worked in the construction industry. In 1908, he moved to Kansas City. Through the years, Siedhoff built a reputation as an expert in the latest structural technique: reinforced concrete construction. After receiving the contract to build structures for the Standard Oil Company (1916), Seidhoff

¹⁷"Emporia Hotels Always Have Been Big Factor in Town's Life," *Emporia Gazette*, 8 June 1953.

¹⁸"Probe Smoldering Hotel Ruins for Bodies of 3 Men," *Topeka Capital*, 21 March 1921; Laura M. French, *History of Emporia and Lyon County* (Emporia: Emporia Gazette, 1929), 118.

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moved to Wichita in 1917. He used his concrete construction expertise to build some of the city's highest-profile buildings, including the Board of Trade (1921, NRHP), Hillcrest Apartments, Allis Hotel (demolished), Broadview Hotel (which he also owned), Innes Furniture Warehouse (NRHP), and United States Post Office and Federal Building (NRHP). Siedhoff also constructed residential buildings, including a number of homes in Wichita's College Hill neighborhood.

The 1920s were good to George Siedhoff, whose success the *Wichita Beacon* lauded:

During the past year Mr. Siedhoff has constructed more than a million dollars worth of buildings in Wichita, including the county jail, Shirkmere hotel, Kaufman building, Western Newspaper building, Luling Laundry, electric plant for Red Star Mill, addition to the Beacon Building, W. A. Dye Building, and Dan Callahan's residence.¹⁹

Two months after opening Wichita's Broadview Hotel, Siedhoff signed a contract with the Emporia Hotel Corporation, agreeing to "furnish the necessary construction equipment for and to supervise, manage and superintend the construction and erection of a modern first-class, fire proof hotel building ... according to architect's plans and specifications ... at a total cost of not to exceed Two Hundred Thousand (\$200,000) Dollars."²⁰

Because the construction season was waning and more than a year had past since the Whitley burned, everyone involved was anxious to complete the new building. In the two weeks following the contract's execution, Siedhoff assembled the equipment necessary for the job, which was scheduled to begin mid-September, 1922.²¹ Throughout the construction, as many as 50 men were employed excavating the site, building forms and pouring concrete. Despite the best efforts of the contractors and stockholders, construction was delayed. S. N. Parker, a representative of the Emporia Hotel Company, blamed the holdup on the "conditions on the railroads" (1922 Railroad Strike), which hampered the conveyance of the construction materials. Eventually the railroad brought four cars of sand and two cars of crushed rock.²² Once the materials arrived, construction was delayed by the weather. The newspaper

¹⁹ *Wichita Beacon*, 2 January 1924.

²⁰ Project Agreement, Emporia Hotel Corporation to Siedhoff Construction, et al, filed August 25, 1924, Lyon County Register of Deeds; *Wichita Beacon*, 28 May 1922. Although the original contract mentions that the building was designed by an architect, there is no documentation that shows who the architect may have been. Siedhoff had experience with Wichita architects who designed such buildings at the time.

²¹ "Ready to Build Hotel," *Emporia Times*. Clippings.

²² *Emporia Times*. Clippings.

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reported that 25 coke fires were used to keep the concrete from crumbling and anticipated the completion of "concrete rough work ... by January 15."²³ After work began, the company decided to add two additional stories to the building.

The construction delays affected at least one scheduled event, the Kansas Florists Convention. To accommodate the conventioners, contractors rushed to complete the building's first five floors. They were only partly successful, managing to complete the guest rooms with the exception of the toilets. To compensate, they installed temporary toilets in public restrooms and select guest rooms.²⁴ The hotel was not formally opened to the public until September 21, 1923, when then-manager H. R. McGehe invited the public to a community dinner and dance.²⁵

The Broadview was replete with all the modern conveniences the Progressive-Era public had come to expect. On the first floor was a "lobby, a large grill room, tea room, coffee shop, kitchen and baggage room, seven sample rooms, auditors' office and check room ..." Each of the six upper stories had twenty-five rooms. Finishes, which included tile, concrete, marble, and wood, were simple.²⁶

Even before Emporia's Broadview was completed, Siedhoff was laying plans for a similar 1000-room Broadview Hotel in Kansas City. He named his son Elmer Siedhoff (1903-1988) to manage the hotel in Emporia. Early advertisements assured guests that Elmer Siedhoff, then in his early 20s, was his father's "personal representative."²⁷ Having completed the 150-room Broadview, Emporia boasted 425 hotel rooms citywide and promoted itself as a "Convention Headquarters," to which "All Trains and Roads" led. The building came to house the offices and studios of Radio Station KTSW – 1370 and Chamber of Commerce – and the meeting place of the Emporia Rotary Club.²⁸ At its peak, the building was Emporia's "Largest Business Institution," employing 125 citizens.

Through the 1920s, the hotel hosted many conventions, including, notoriously, the statewide Ku Klux Klan convention in 1924. However, the hotel business changed drastically after the

²³ "Hotel Work Progressing." *Emporia Times*. Clippings.

²⁴ "Broadview Will Open August 2," *Emporia Times*. Clippings.

²⁵ "Broadview Hotel Formal Opening Friday Afternoon and Evening." *Emporia Times*. Clippings.

²⁶ "Emporia's New Hotel One of Best in Middle West." *Emporia Times*. Clippings.

²⁷ "The Hotels Broadview: The Convention Hotels of Kansas," Kansas State Historical Society, K 647.94, pam v.

²⁸ "Home is where the heart is," Kansas State Historical Society, 647.94 pam. v.

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roaring twenties. In 1959, Emporia's historic Fifth Avenue Hotel, re-named Hotel Whitley (not to be confused with the Whitley that burned down), closed after nearly 80 years in business. Despite efforts to reinvent itself as a "motor hotel," the Broadview had lost its luster by the time George Siedhoff and his wife moved to Emporia in 1954.²⁹ Heavily invested in boom-time interests, Siedhoff had gone bankrupt after the 1929 stock market crash. In 1938, he was forced to sell Wichita's Broadview Hotel, managed at the time by his daughter Viola Siedhoff.³⁰

In 1964, the Emporia Hotel Corporation announced plans to sell the Hotel Broadview, citing manager Elmer Siedhoff's decision to retire.³¹ The corporation held an auction April 15, 1964, in which Key Acres, Inc. of Salina offered \$152,700 for the property. Following some confidential negotiations, the Emporia Hotel Corporation agreed to sell the building to Key Acres, transferring the property to the new owners on June 15, 1964.³²

After reluctantly announcing plans to convert the building to luxury apartments, Key Acres "failed to carry through." The building was still vacant in 1966, when George Siedhoff died.³³ Late that year, the College of Emporia stepped in, converting the building into a "Downtown

Campus Center" with offices and student housing. The College of Emporia, a Presbyterian school established in 1882, used the upper floors as a dormitory until 1972, when declining enrollment forced them to abandon them, and the first floor as offices until 1974, when the college closed. In that year, the school sold the building to the Broadview Towers, Inc. for re-development. The building, renamed Broadview Towers, became one of the nation's first FHA senior housing projects.

Reinforced Concrete Construction

One reason the Hotel Broadview has endured for eighty-five years, is its reinforced-concrete construction, a technique honed from construction methods developed for use in Chicago high-rises and early industrial buildings, like the early buildings George Siedhoff constructed. Prior to the late nineteenth century, massive construction limited the expression of architects and engineers. Nineteenth-century technological developments, such as the introduction of cast-iron skeletal structural systems, greatly expanded design possibilities. The first building types

²⁹ *Wichita Eagle*, Wednesday, September 16, 1964.

³⁰ *Wichita Beacon*, 22 April 1938. *Wichita Eagle*, 22 April 1938.

³¹ Auction leaflet, Kansas State Historical Society, K 647.94 pam. 1964

³² "Salina Firm Buys Hotel in Emporia," *Topeka Capital*, 7 May 1964.

³³ "Discover Historic Wichita."

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that benefited from this technology were transportation-related structures engineered by Europeans for use by railroads and industry. The "metal skeleton" method of construction spread to the United States, where architects employed the technique in rebuilding Chicago after the infamous 1871 fire. From the ashes rose the nation's first skyscrapers, buildings such as Daniel Burnham's Reliance Building (1895) and Louis Sullivan's Carson, Pirie, Scott and Co. Store (1904).

In the early years of skeletal design, most architects struggled to fully express its design potential. Public expectations about structural stability, honed by a steady diet of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, left designers scrambling to add weight to the open shells. At the same time, architects had not yet broken from the trend to add superfluous details. They created the look of carved stone, cornices, and columns within the cast-iron medium. Although architects were beginning to break from traditional styles in the construction of industrial buildings, such as Wichita's Innes Furniture Warehouse (called a "daylight factory"), they continued to use traditional fenestration patterns and forms for non-industrial buildings like the Hotel Broadview.

After the 1911 New York Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, which killed 146 people, Progressive-era reformers advocated for fire-safety building codes. Steel frames alone were not fire resistant. But engineers/architects developed a fireproof skeletal system using steel in tandem with concrete. The result was a revolutionary structural system called ferroconcrete. Ferroconcrete, concrete reinforced with steel bars or metal netting, was invented in 1849. But the material was not used to its full potential until the early twentieth century. First widely promoted in 1907 when Atlas Portland Cement Company of New York published a book entitled *Reinforced Concrete in Factory Construction*, ferroconcrete could be used for both structural framing and finish material. Leaving the concrete unsheathed, like it is on the Innes Furniture Warehouse, was desirable as ornamentation was seen as an unnecessary and expensive fire hazard. Ferroconcrete's smooth finish conformed to the taste of International Style architects as well who preferred smooth stucco or glazed terra cotta to archaic brick. But the technique was also useful for the efficient fire-proof construction of Commercial Style structures to be clad in brick.

Some architects used ferroconcrete for every structural member of their designs – vertical exterior supports, floors, and interior support columns. The columns were typically squared with uniform width from the floor or column base to the capital. Although they ranged in appearance, columns were very plain. Columns were the only interior structure necessary in reinforced concrete skeleton buildings. This technological advancement made the buildings well-suited for warehouse space as in the case of the Innes Furniture Warehouse

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– but also allowed for flexibility of interior plans, as in the case of hotels.³⁴

The Commercial Style

Like that of its “sister hotel” in Wichita, the exterior of the Hotel Broadview represents the early twentieth-century Commercial Style. This style is most often seen in downtown commercial buildings from the 1910s and 1920s. Unlike their nineteenth-century predecessors, these buildings feature simple lines, without applied or projecting decorative elements such as elaborate cornices. These buildings had an emphasis on fire-resistance with fire-proof materials such as reinforced concrete, brick and steel. In addition to their clean lines, Commercial Style buildings are defined by a number of exterior features such as parapets capped with squared-off stone or concrete, rough brick with raked mortar joints, and double-hung windows with square upper and lower sashes – in contrast to the tall, narrow windows seen in late-nineteenth-century commercial buildings. These windows can be 1/1 double-hung sash, or a multiple-pane upper sash over a single-pane lower sash. Stylistic elements were limited to brick corbelling or the incorporation of integrated decorative masonry elements such as geometric stone patterns or applied terra cotta.

Like other Commercial Style structures, the Hotel Broadview features geometric masonry patterns including applied carved decoration, multiple-pane sash, rough brick with raked mortar joints, and a capped parapet at the roofline. The building’s reinforced concrete structure, brick façade and curtain walls, and steel windows are attributes common among fire-proof commercial construction that became the norm during the Progressive Era. The style was particularly fitting for the Broadview, which not only replaced a building destroyed in a devastating fire, but also was constructed in a community that regularly boasted its “Progressiveness.”

The Hotel Broadview falls into a type of commercial architecture identified by Richard Longstreth as the two-part commercial block. Two-part commercial blocks became common in the late nineteenth century when multi-story buildings began to serve multiple functions. Generally, two-part commercial blocks house storefronts on the first level and a secondary function – such as housing, hotel, or office space – on the upper stories.³⁵

³⁴ Betsy Bradley, *The Works: the industrial architecture of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Renyer Banham, *A concrete Atlantis: U. S. industrial building and European modern architecture, 1900-1925* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1986). Christy Davis, “Innes Furniture Warehouse” Statement of Significance.

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Summary

Like many late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century hotels, the Hotel Broadview was a symbol of community progress and pride. Its construction was made possible only through the hard work and sacrifices of Emporia citizens, business leaders, and town boosters like famed editor William Allen White. Following its completion, the hotel unwittingly played a role in the fall of the Kansas Ku Klux Klan, which at its height boasted a membership of 200,000. After the hotel closed, the building was used by one of the city's oldest institutions, the College of Emporia. Later, it became home to the very residents who five decades earlier celebrated the building as an expression of the community's "progressiveness" and warm hospitality.

³⁵ Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, updated edition (New York: Alta Mira Press, 2000).

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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property includes the land on which the Broadview Towers is located in Section 10, Township 19, Range 11E, Subdivision E13, Part of Lots 87, 89, 91, Merchant Street beginning at the Southeast corner of Lot 87, West 130', North 150', East 70', South 62.33', East 60', South 87' to Point of Beginning. In addition, the nominated property includes a second tract owned separately. This tract is located in Parts of Lots 89 and 91, Merchant Street, beginning in the Northeast Corner of Lot 91, South 62.33', West 60', North 62.33', East 60' to Point of Beginning.

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundary includes the tracts on which both the Broadview Towers and associated storefronts lie.

Photo Log

All photos were taken by Christy Davis on March 14, 2008.

1. Exterior, South and East Elevations.
2. Exterior, South and West Elevations.
3. Exterior, North and West Elevations.
4. Exterior, West Elevation.
5. Exterior, Closeup of Storefronts on South Elevation.
6. Exterior, Closeup of three types of bricks.
7. Interior, Overall view of Second-floor hallway.
8. Interior, Letterbox.
9. Interior, Letterbox.
10. Interior, Cast-iron stair railing.
11. Interior, Reinforced concrete construction.
12. Interior, Door in basement.
13. Interior, Door in basement.
14. Interior, Door in basement.